soon as possible, but he had no objection to adjourn the consideration of the report until it should be printed. He should be prepared to enter fully into the subject when they next assembled for the purpose.

The report was then ordered to be printed, and to be taken into consideration in detail at the next court.

SPITALFIELDS SCHOOL OF DESIGN.

On Tuesday afternoon at three o'clock a distribution of prizes to the pupils educated in the above school of design took place at Crosby-hall, in Bishopsgate-street. The chair was taken by Lord Robert Grosvenor, M.P., and on the platform there were the Right Hon. Lord Colborne, Mr. Gillman, Mr. Cockerell, Mr. Doxat, and many other gentlemen whose names we were not able to learn. The room and galleries were completely filled, a great many ladies being present; and around the apartment were exhibited several of the prize productions of the pupils, including drawings in crayons and water-colours, and designs for damask furniture, silk, &c. After a speech from the noble chairman, in which he congratulated the meeting upon the progress of the school, the report was read by Mr. Hanbury, which stated, amongst other particulars, that the number of pupils had increased from 122 to 180; that 1,000*l.* had been obtained by the late ball in aid of the funds of the institution, and that, if further pecuniary aid were obtained, many and various improvements, &c. might be effected. The report having been adopted, the prizes were distributed by the noble chairman as follows:—

No. 1. To John Brown, for the best drawing of flowers from nature, in crayons—given by Mr. C. R. Cockerell, R.A., 3*l.* 3s. 2. William Thomas, for the second-best drawing from nature—given by Messrs. Truman, Hanbury, and Co., 1*l.* 11s. 6d. 3. William E. Cadman, for the best drawing from nature of flowers in water-colours—given by Lord R. Grosvenor, 2*l.* 2s. 4. S. Nolloth, for second-best drawing of flowers from nature, in water-colours—given by Lord R. Grosvenor, 1*l.* 1s. 5. Nimrod Binns, for the best outline drawing of flowers from nature—given by Messrs. Truman, Hanbury, and Co., 1*l.* 11s. 6d. 6. Anthony Binns, for second-best of the same class—given by Messrs. Truman, Hanbury, and Co., 10s. 6d. 7. John Tuffnell, for the best drawing in crayons from plaster cast—given by Messrs. Truman, Hanbury, and Co., 1*l.* 11s. 6d. 8. James Kiberd, for second-best of the same class—given by Lord R. Grosvenor, 10s. 6d. 9. John Burridge, for the best drawing in crayons from lithograph—given by Lord R. Grosvenor, 1*l.* 1s. 10. Charles Branchflower, for best outline drawing from lithograph—given by Lord R. Grosvenor, 10s. 6d. 11. John Brown, for best design for damask furniture—given by Mr. G. T. Kemp, 2*l.* 2s. 12. John Tuffnell, for best design for 600-curd garment silk—given by Mr. T. F. Gibson, 2*l.* 2s. 13. Nimrod Binns, for best design for silk, 6½ inches by 10 inches—given by Messrs. Bridges, Campbell, Harrison, and Lloyd, 2*l.* 2s. 14. James Kiberd, for best design for border of tablecloth—given by Mr. William Dewar, 1*l.* 1s. 15. John Dudley, for best design for the centre of tablecloth—given by Mr. W. Dewar, 1*l.* 1s.

The following prizes were given by the committee:—

16. To William Everitt, for best drawing in his class—"Rise and Progress of the Silk Manufacture." 17. Richard Fryer, for best drawing in his class—practical perspective. 18. Henry Dye, for best drawing of his class—"Catermole's History of the Cartoons." 19. Frederick Palmer, for best drawing of his class—"Guide to Knowledge."

Some of the above-mentioned pupils were exceedingly youthful; they were all loudly applauded as they marched up to the chair, and to many of them Lord R. Grosvenor addressed a few words in a very kind and courteous manner. Thanks were then voted to the committee and other officers; a committee for the ensuing year was elected, and after a tribute had been paid to the noble chairman for his services (which was done very warmly), the meeting dispersed, at about half past four o'clock. We should observe that this is only the second year of the school's existence, but, from what occurred, it appears likely to meet with every encouragement. We cursorily inspected some of the prize patterns, and were really surprised at their beauty and excellence.

HISTORY OF LABOUR IN THE BUILDING CRAFTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

SIR,—Convinced by the tone of your journal that you purpose an effective advocacy of the interests of the great body of artisans and labourers connected with building, I am induced to offer the subjoined historical facts and illustrations, relative to their condition in past times, for insertion; if favoured with your attention, I may continue the subject down to our own day, endeavouring as I proceed to bring under notice causes which have a tendency to affect permanence of employment and rates of wages.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant.

"When it becomes a question to ascertain the resources of an empire, the superficial statician visits the palaces of its monarch, its ports, harbours, and arsenals, and calculates the numerical amount of its armies; but the sound politician deduces other conclusions by investigating the true sources of greatness, which are found in the condition of the mechanical and labouring population. The first enumerates the mere extensive appendages of a government; the latter estimates the latent strength and energy of a nation."—KOSEGARTEN.

If I have rightly rendered the language of the French philosopher, he attached much importance to the well-being of those classes which necessarily constitute the bulk of the people. I am of his opinion: and, with this view, can hardly conceive a subject more acceptable or useful to mechanics and labourers than a succinct history of the condition and progress of their own body, from the earliest period of authentic record to that at which I write. Information of this kind has, it is true, always existed, but in a diffused state; contained in the manuscript rolls of times preceding the art of printing, or in works of a voluminous and costly character, not generally accessible.

Facility for the acquirement of facts and incidents of this description is more desirable than may appear at a first glance, it is one of the great sources of enlightenment, for it enables us to institute comparisons borne out by experience, and to reason calmly, but conclusively, upon the chequered policy of governments; it involves also a notice of the ancient guilds, or trade fraternities: of successive societies formed for the protection of trade interests; of the causes that have concurred to neutralize their effects, and as a general result, will excite attention towards the best means of remedying the uncertainty both as to quantity of employment and amount of wages, which now affects the most extensive and useful trades.

While with respect to building, the arts, whether of construction or embellishment, can hardly be said to have progressed, inasmuch as we have no structures of modern date approaching, in extent or styles of ornature, to those of past ages, the condition and modes of living of workmen prosecuting these arts have undergone great transitions. Yet, and notwithstanding the multiplied enjoyments which an increased knowledge has introduced, mankind, so far as indispensable requisites are concerned, is still the same; whether engaged in the mechanical arts or the pursuits of science, we all feel certain and definite physical wants; these may be comprised in the short summary of *food*, *raiment*, and *habitation*, and it will be my province to shew how far these have been procurable by the wages of labour in the several stages through which society has passed.

I must here assume it to be sufficiently understood that all wealth and the concomitants of prosperity proceed from labour, and that the revenues of the non-producing classes are available only in giving them the command of that labour; wealth in itself is therefore no further an advantage than in confining this power, and which various casualties place more or less within their disposal.* What edifice could be raised without its "hewers of stone" and "drawers of water?" Architectural design and decoration are preliminaries which admit of many modifications by a single hand; but no sooner is a plan decided on, than we must have recourse to diggers of foundations and quarriers of stone. In these operations, the reputation of the architect may be more enviable, but the labour of the mason is more practically useful; the "jutting frieze" and "Corinthian column" generally owe their solidity to the brickwork behind them.†

* Where I say of this maxim that "it is sufficiently understood," my meaning must be taken as conveying a dictum as conclusive to any that can in general be applied to an abstract principle. It is the various modes in which capital is brought to bear, more particularly in operations upon a large scale, that induce intricacies of distinction, which I shall endeavour to render intelligible as I proceed.

† Eden, on the State of the Poor.

In the inquiry I propose little would be gained by referring to the Saxon and Norman times of *villeinage*, when man, by a fiction of power, was deemed and treated as the property of the territorial lord. I have to consider him when, after centuries of suffering, he had been emancipated from the soil; when, having wrenched the iron collar of bondage from his neck, he stood erect A FREEMAN! demanding and receiving the wages of his labour; still, in the times to which I must necessarily carry back my retrospect, the building arts had but the limited operation coinciding with the divisions of society. The Church demanded and received the first-fruits of architectural skill, which indeed she had always cultivated within the frail and undecorated walls of the first seats of piety and learning in Britain; the nomenclature of this period recognized but two other classes: namely, lord and vassal. These terms were most comprehensive, for they comprised in the first place the monarch and his vassal nobles; and in the second, the lord or baron, and his dependent serfs. By the class of lords, castellated architecture alone was cultivated; the turreted and machiolated structure, with its donjon-keep, serving at once purposes of defiance and tyranny, and to perpetuate these distinguishing features of the feudal ages. The tenants of the church alone had some few privileges; the socage or free tenures, in consideration of fixed chief rents and services, encouraged on their lands, held out, by the improvement thereby originated in agriculture, examples to the great feudatories, and thus slowly grew up a middle order; the sons and descendants of these socmen, who from time to time transferred themselves to villages and towns, and followed trading or handicraft occupations, retaining the denomination of freemen, with exemption from personal thraldom.

But to whatever portion of history we turn, we catch glimpses of the exercise of trades conducive to the immediate wants of mankind, and those connected with building were among the first and most important, a proficiency having been attained, which is evident in the stupendous efforts of human skill and labour perfected at extremely remote periods. Be it remembered, also, that with building, or more properly, in the present stage of our inquiry, *Masonry*, originated the many auxiliary trades and professions which have grown into practice with it. Waving abstruse research, and confining myself to examples existing in this and adjacent countries, I may point to the middle ages as redundant in the production of splendid ecclesiastical buildings, the work of a fraternity always bearing the designation of *Freemasons*, and under which workmen of this class continued to be distinguished in the records of wages. I shall have occasion to quote, on the term *Freemason*, as applied to the builders of old, in contradistinction to the modern appellative borne by a most numerous, respectable, and benevolent order. It may be necessary to state that it had immemorial existence in the most ancient kingdoms and states of the world. *Freemasons* probably first came hither with the Roman legions, and never afterwards quitted the British soil, native artisans joining them and gradually arriving at the skill of their foreign instructors.

The association of *Freemasons* admitted members of every country, but its government was peculiar and administered by its own officers; it was the concentration of talent and unity of action of this body that enabled them to achieve the GOTHIC STYLE in all its varieties, and to embody those sublime conceptions of religious architecture which all experience has proved to be most congruous to the devotional aspirations of man. When a building was to be erected, these artists and artisans, for they united both qualifications, formed an encampment of huts around the site, where they continued until it was reared; allowing none but recognized members to engage in the work. It is certain that the ancient FREEMASONS present the first example of a FRATERNITY OR GUILD for the special purpose of planning and executing large works; and detachments or parties of this body ranged throughout Europe, wherever their services were required, and sufficient inducements could be held out to them.

VINDEX.

(To be continued.)

EAST COAST LINE OF RAILWAY TO SCOTLAND.—Sir Robert Peel last week gave audience to Mr. Hudson, chairman of the York and North Midland and Newcastle and Darlington Railway Companies; Mr. H. Hind, M.P. for Newcastle; Mr. Lowther, M.P. for York; Mr. Hodgson, M.P. for Berwick, and Mr. Robert Stephenson, civil engineer; when Mr. Hudson explained his plan for continuing the line of railway, now nearly completed, from London to Newcastle, forward to Berwick, and thence to Edinburgh, and solicited the aid of government. The deputation was very courteously received.

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